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MINNEAPOLIS INST. OF ARTS
CAT. OF EXHIB. OF EMBROIDERY
& TEXTILES June 15-Aug. 15-1915

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THE MINNEAPOLIS
INSTITUTE OF ARTS

CATALOGUE
OF AN
EXHIBITION
OF
EMBROIDERIES
AND
TEXTILES

JUNE 15—AUGUST 15
1915

afforded opportunity for the exercise of the embroiderer's skill. It may be noted, by the way, that these embroiderers were generally men, organized in guilds and holding high position among the craftsmen of their time. Distinguished artists were not above supplying the working drawings for embroideries, so that the study of embroidery is, in a way, a commentary upon the history of the fine arts.

Lavish use of embroidery was not confined to the Church alone. In the middle ages, before the extensive manufacture of woven textiles had begun to compete with the more limited and costly product of the embroiderers, secular costume, of the nobles at least, was generally enriched with sumptuous embroideries.

Fashions change, but the embroiderer has never lacked employment, although today, perhaps more than at any other time, the beautiful productions of the weaver's loom, produced necessarily at far less expense than embroidery, have limited, if not the popularity, at least the use of embroidery in costume and decoration. This is a regrettable result of the mechanical age in which we live. It is not that we love beauty less—are even, if you will, less vain—than our ancestors, but that we have other and more compelling interests for the moment. But who knows what the future may bring forth? There may come a day when, unabashed as were our fore-fathers in the bravery of their embroidered coats and

breeches, man may gratify his innate desire to deck himself in fine raiment less surreptitiously than he does today, without the feeble excuses of masquerades and carnivals.

Time has dealt more severely with embroideries than with perhaps any other works of art. In the middle ages continual wars and pillage caused the destruction of countless masterpieces of the embroiderer's art. During the Reformation and the French Revolution, church embroideries were destroyed in great quantities by iconoclastics and vandals. As was true of the gold woven tapestries, many priceless embroideries were burned to obtain the precious metal used in their ornamentation. To the dictates of fashion, we owe, furthermore, the loss of many treasures of ecclesiastical embroidery. The old patterns went out of style and vestments were thrown away or exchanged for something new. Even when the ancient vestments escaped destruction they were generally mutilated at the dictates of fashion, cut here and pared away there, until they lost the beauty of their original shape. But where so much has been destroyed, we must be thankful that even in this abbreviated shape the embroideries of the orphreys and something of the beautiful velvets and brocades of the ground have been preserved to us.

Fine embroideries are rare indeed. It is, consequently, very gratifying that through the courtesy of P. W. French & Co. of New York it has

been possible for the Institute to exhibit in the large gallery on the second floor a remarkable group of beautiful embroideries of the Renaissance and later periods. For the most part, these are ecclesiastical vestments. The beautiful cope and chasuble, Nos. 6 and 13, are remarkable examples of late XV century Spanish embroidery. The beauty of the embroidery is enhanced by the sumptuous character of the gold brocaded ground. Among the other vestments may be noted the beautiful Italian cope of the XVI century, No. 1. Two altar frontals, Nos. 11, 15, are characteristic examples of this class of work. The antependium, No. 24, will arouse enthusiasm among all lovers of English petit point embroidery. The large hanging, No. 9, illustrates a typical phase of Portuguese embroidery, strikingly decorative in effect. Several examples of the XVIII century embroidery will well repay careful inspection. Among the unembroidered textiles are many pieces extremely effective in pattern and beauty of texture, but perhaps none will afford more pleasure to the eyes of those who love textiles than the mulberry colored velvet cope, No. 23, reminding one of jewels in the play of light over its soft surface. J. B.

CATALOGUE

Items are arranged in order of exhibition

1. COPE. ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY. A magnificent crimson velvet cope with orphreys of gold embroidery with oval medallions, in gold and silk, representing, beginning at the left, St. Andrew, St. Peter, St. James the Great, a Bishop, the Virgin and Child, and a female Saint.

2 and 3. TWO VALANCES. ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY. Two examples of crimson velvet valances with designs in galoon and gold fringes, used in the ornamentation of churches on festival days.

4. CHASUBLE. ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY. Upon a ground of crimson velvet are applied gold and silver embroidered orphreys showing the characteristic ornament and designs of the period. In the medallions on the back are represented God the Father, the Virgin and Child, and St. James the Great.

5. HANGING. ITALIAN, XVIII CENTURY. Two strips of Genoese velvet, with a large pattern in magenta on a cream-colored ground. This fabric formed part originally of the hangings of some church.

6. CHASUBLE. SPANISH, LATE XV CENTURY. See under No. 13.

7. HANGING. ITALIAN, LATE XVI OR EARLY XVII CENTURY. This hanging is composed of three strips of beautiful jardiniere velvet, so called from the flower design which is woven in seven colors on a cream-colored ground. An exceptionally beautiful example.

8. CHASUBLE. XVI CENTURY. The embroidered orphreys are applied upon velvet having a cream-colored ground with a small over-all pattern in mauve. The embroideries represent the Virgin and Child and two Monastic Saints.

9. HANGING. PORTUGUESE, EARLY XVII CENTURY. This hanging is composed of three widths, sewed together, of XVI century olive green velvet ornamented with embroidery and applique decorations of striking design.

10. PANEL. SPANISH (?), XVIII CENTURY. This panel, possibly a banner or part of a costume, is richly ornamented with embroidery in gold and colored silks on a burnt-orange ground.

11. ALTAR FRONTAL. ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY. The dark red velvet ground is richly embroidered in gold, and ornamented with bands of embroidery figuring saints executed in colored silks and gold. The over-all patterning of the velvet cloth is particularly effective. Beginning at the bottom of the left vertical strip the Saints represented are St. Barbara, St. Paul, St. Matthias (?), St. Bartholomew, St. James the Great, St. Lawrence or Stephen, the Virgin and Child, St. Peter, a female Saint, St. Joseph, and St. Florian (?).

12. VALANCE. ITALIAN OR SPANISH, XVI CENTURY. A typical example of the valances used for the decoration of churches on festival days. This panel of crimson velvet ornamented with gold galoon and deep fringe is a striking witness to the splendor of the Renaissance period.

13. COPE AND CHASUBLE. SPANISH, LATE XV CENTURY. Red and gold ground brocade enriched with gold tinsel and woven in a pomegranate design, a favorite pattern for the rich textiles of the XV century. The orphrey and capuchon are marvelous examples of embroidery in design and execution. They are ascribed to the famous embroiderers of Toledo. The

embroideries on the cope represent the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Assumption, the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Meeting of St. Anne and St. Joachim. The embroideries on the back of the chasuble represent the Crucifixion, Christ in the Garden, the Betrayal. The subject of the embroidery on the capuchon is the Trinity. The cope is one of the most beautiful of ecclesiastical vestments. It is a processional mantle or cloak worn over the other vestments. The chasuble is a vestment usually richly ornamented worn by the celebrant at the Mass or Eucharist. Both the chasuble and the cope are ornamented with orphreys, borders or cross-shaped bands of decoration. The subjects are commonly scenes from the life of Christ, representations of saints, usually the apostles or patron saints of the particular church for which the vestments were made. The capuchon is the simulated hood forming part of the cope.

14. PANEL. SPANISH, EARLY XVII CENTURY. This panel originally formed part of an altar frontal used in the private chapel of the deposed King of Portugal. It is a marvelous example of gold embroidery enriched with silver and colored silks.

15. ALTAR FRONTAL. SPANISH, LATE XVI CENTURY. On a ground of crimson velvet ornamented with embroidered designs are applied embroidered figures representing the Annunciation. The valance is of cloth of gold ornamented with coats of arms of the cathedral for which it was made.

16. PANEL. SPANISH, XVI CENTURY. This panel or strip of crimson and gold velvet is particularly noticeable for its interesting design, a typical pattern of the period.

17. BANNER. FRENCH, XVIII CENTURY. This triangular processional banner of crimson silk is sumptuously ornamented with gold embroidery exhibiting a great variety of stitches. The quality of embroidery and beauty of design are especially fine.

18. SMALL CAPE. SPANISH, XVIII CENTURY. Originally used as a cape for a statue of the Virgin. The brocade is a cream-colored ground ornamented with a design in gold, silver, and colors.

19. CAPUCHON. ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY. This capuchon, or hood of a cope, is embroidered with gold and silk on green velvet and trimmed with gold silk knotted

fringe. The embroidery represents the Virgin and Child.

20. DALMATIC. FRENCH OR SPANISH, EARLY XVIII CENTURY. Salmon-colored silk, ornamented with marvelous silver embroidery. The dalmatic is a wide-sleeved loose vestment with slit sides worn by deacons.

21. HANGING. FRENCH, XVII CENTURY. Several breadths of sumptuous cloth of gold and silver fabric, originally used as a court dress, make up this beautiful piece of decoration. The textile has a characteristic design in silver, gold, and colors on a salmon-colored ground.

22. COPE. SPANISH, XVI CENTURY. Crimson velvet cope ornamented with orphreys richly embroidered with gold and silver, representing in circular medallions, beginning at the left, St. Matthias (?), St. John, St. Peter, two Saints unidentified, and St. Andrew.

23. COPE. ITALIAN, LATE XVI CENTURY. This cope of mulberry-colored velvet is unornamented except for the gold gimp, but will attract attention for the fineness and rich color of the velvet.

24. ANTEPENDIUM. ENGLISH, LATE XVI CENTURY. This fine example of English petit-point embroidery probably ornamented the front of an altar. The subjects, except the first on the left, depict events in the life of Christ: Christ in the Garden, Christ before the High Priest, the Flagellation, the Deposition, the Entombment, and the Resurrection. The first panel apparently represents Jupiter, although in Renaissance costume, and presumably does not belong to the other scenes.

25. BROCADE. FRENCH, LOUIS XIV PERIOD (1643-1715). On a gold-colored ground, the floral design is woven in silver and colored silks. (Exhibited in Gallery B18, First Floor.)

26. BROCADE. FRENCH, LOUIS XV PERIOD (1723-1774). This brocade with floral design on a blue satin ground is a characteristic example of the beautiful fabrics of the Louis XV period. (Exhibited in Gallery B18, First Floor.

THE MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOL OF ART

SUMMER SESSION

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